

Wisconsin Child Support Program - Highlights 2005

Overview

The Wisconsin Child Support Program automatically provides financial management for all who pay or receive support - child support, family support, medical support and maintenance (alimony). Financial management services are limited to income withholding, processing support payments and providing account information.

Parents may also apply for case management services at their local child support agency. Parents who apply for public aid are automatically enrolled in the Wisconsin Child Support Program and receive most services free of cost.

Child Support Resources for Limited English Proficient Customers

Extensive information about Wisconsin's Child Support Program is readily available in print and online for Limited English Proficient Customers.

Child support publications and forms are routinely printed in Spanish and Hmong. These documents are also available on the web <http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/bcs/pubs/pubtitle.htm>

The most popular items are the informational booklets for parents receiving child support and for parents who pay child support. Publication topics also include legal fatherhood, child support requirements for W-2 and Medicaid participants, guidelines for setting order amounts, and reviewing and modifying current orders. More than 20,000 copies of Spanish and Hmong publications are ordered each year.

In 2000, a Spanish-language page and a Hmong-language page were added to the Bureau of Child Support's website <http://childsupport.wisconsin.gov>. Over the years, the Spanish and Hmong sites have been augmented and enhanced to better resemble the English-language pages.

The "Information for Parents" pages in Spanish (Información para Padres) http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/bcs/parents_s.htm and Hmong (Xov Qhia Rau Cov Ua Niam Ua Txiv) http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/bcs/parents_h.htm include links to topic areas contained in BCS's publications, child support calculators, and other Spanish and Hmong-language resources for parents (jobs, parenting, child care). These pages and child support materials are accessed more than 4,000 times each month.

Child Support Online Services

Twelve months ago, the Bureau of Child Support unveiled its Child Support Online Services website <https://www.dwd.state.wi.us/bcs/payments/>. This free service is available to parents to view child support payments.

Parents may view detailed payment information for the past 60 days. With the up-coming Labor Day weekend, this site will be especially useful to parents shopping for back-to-school clothes and supplies--they will be able to view the payments received and processed on Saturday (September 3) by the Wisconsin Support Collections Trust Fund.

On average, this site receives 87,500 visits each month.

As resources allow, additional features will be added to Child Support Online Services. Currently a project is underway to add account balances and the ability to print payment coupons.

Direct Deposit

Another free service parents may use to ensure timely receipt of child support payments is direct deposit. Download an application for direct deposit <http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/bcs/ddbrochure.pdf>

Employers as Partners

Employers are important partners in the Child Support Program and play an essential role in our continuing efforts to improve conditions for the children in our state. Employers, by withholding support payments from their employees' income, account for more than 70% of all child support collections. During the last fiscal year, October 2003 - September 2004, employers withheld \$655 million in support payments.

Employers also assist the Child Support Program by reporting newly hired and rehired employees to UI's New Hire Reporting <http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/uinh/>. New Hire Reporting interfaces with child support's KIDS computer system, alerting workers of a paying parent's new job. This important effort ensures that support to families is not interrupted due to a parent's change of employment. New Hire Reporting also helps employers identify former employees who are receiving unemployment but have found new jobs.

Child Support's Employer web page <http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/bcs/employer.htm> provides detailed information about income withholding and medical support. A link to UI's New Hire is also provided.

High Performance Ratings

Based on a report recently released by the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, Wisconsin's Child Support Program ranks in the top ten nationally in seven performance areas and exceeds the national average in every measure.

Wisconsin collected more than \$588 million, the tenth largest amount despite being 20th in population. Not only do our state and county staff excel in performance, they do so efficiently. Collections exceed \$5.90 for every \$1 spent. For families who had previously received public assistance; collections exceeded \$2,400 per case--double the national average. Wisconsin posted superior numbers in the following measures as well:

- Collections per full-time employee (FTE): \$528,649/FTE, 45% more than the national average.
- Collections rate: 67.6% of current support due, compared to national average of 59%.
- Total of all collections (current and past-due): \$588,914,411 or \$184 million more than the national average of \$404,915,411.
- Percent of nonmarital births with paternity establishment: (Paternity must be established before a court may order child support.) Wisconsin paternity establishment rate is 100.15%, the average rate is 85%. Rates may be higher than 100% as the rate is calculated by the number of nonmarital children born in 2003 divided by the number of paternities established in 2004.
- Collections per cases with child support orders \$2,117. National average is \$1,860
- Collections per case: (all cases) \$1,734. National average is \$1,379.
- Percentage of cases with a collection 65.3%. National average is 51.3%.